

5 Times Will was a sad gay™ + 1 time he got his happy ever after by thestrangestbyer

Series: [The Queer Club](#) [2]

Category: IT (2017), Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Angst, Angst with a Happy Ending, F/F, F/M, M/M, Mike/Will for approx 0.2 seconds, Period-Typical Homophobia, Put Richie in bc my OCs suck and ryers, Will-centric, and it got gay, then the losers club popped in to say hi

Language: English

Characters: Beverly Marsh, Dustin Henderson, Eleven (Stranger Things), Jonathan Byers, Lucas Sinclair, Max (Stranger Things), Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Steve Harrington, Will Byers

Relationships: Eleven/Mike Wheeler, Max (Stranger Things)/Beverly Marsh, Will Byers/Mike Wheeler, Will Byers/Original Male Character(s), Will Byers/Richie Tozier

Status: Completed

Published: 2017-11-15

Updated: 2017-11-25

Packaged: 2022-04-03 05:00:48

Rating: Not Rated

Warnings: Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings

Chapters: 2

Words: 4,885

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

A glimpse into Will's life growing up as a gay teen in Hawkins.

1. Chapter 1

Author's Note:

This is....a thing that happened. Sorry in advance for the messed up tenses & perspectives. I wrote this at 3am. Leave a comment if you like it, wanna see a fic or something and all that jazz!

1. 13 years old

He tells Jonathan first. It's late at night and Jonathan and Joyce have been taking shifts sleeping on his floor, so that he never has to sleep alone. They are always there for his nightmares. It's this, more than anything, that convinces him that they'll support him through his waking nightmares, too. So it all comes out, on a dark night in November. Even though he knows his family love him, and that they'll accept him no matter what, he stutters and stumbles and sobs. "I-I think I'm gay," he admits into the quiet, and Jonathan listens, calm and accepting, a steady source of comfort in the wake of his confession, holding him tight. It is the first time he has said the words out loud.

2. 14 years old

He's 14 and all of his friends know and he knows that all of his friends know. He still doesn't mention it. He remembers a night of feigning sleep, over a year ago now, when all of his friends had casually discussed one of his deepest secrets as if it were no big deal. To hear them swear protection so fiercely had made him fall in love with each and everyone of them all over again. He can't stop falling in love with his friends. He falls in love with El every time she levitates books to him with her mind. Falls in love with Max when she punches two boys in the face for being sexist and knees another in the balls for calling Will slurs. Falls in love with Dustin when he hands over every single comic he's ever owned to him as a birthday present. Again and again, falling in love until he thinks his heart will burst. And still he can't tell them.

When he actually does ends up telling them, it's through a dumb joke, of all things. They're riding their bikes for fun rather than because they have any particular destination in mind. Mike pedals ahead, then falls back to check in on every member of the party before wheeling away again. El perches on the back behind Mike, laughing at nothing. Inexplicably, Lucas refuses to communicate unless it's by walkie-talkie and none of them are quite sure why. Max cycles next to Will, and they talk about their day, skating (specifically how awful Will is at it) and other trivial things.

Then Dustin's bike wheel gets caught on a loose stone or something and his bike careens sideways, nearly sending him toppling to the ground.

"Ah shit!" He cries and all of them brake sharply, watching as Dustin lays his bike down in the dirt to inspect the damage. Their bikes are their most prized possessions. You could go anywhere and everywhere in Hawkins if you had a bike, you were free. Dustin groans about repairs and having no money and hey, did they think that ducttape would work?

"It's bent," he informs them, running a hand over one of the bike wheel spokes and before he can stop himself Will blurts out "Me too!" He reddens and claps a hand over his mouth because of course this would be how he breaks the news to his friends. He watches as the party just shrug collectively and exchange amused but relieved glances. They are not shocked. Next to him, Max snorts lightly and punches him gently on the shoulder.

"Good for you, Will," she says whilst Mike smiles at him, shoulder slung around a confused El, who mouths the word 'bent' to herself with a frown. And that's that.

3. 15 years old

At fifteen, Will has had his nose broken twice. Gym is weekly torture. He learns to leave the art block through a back entrance, to avoid being jumped. Now, he sits on the hood of his brothers car, pressing wrapped ice against brand new bruises. His knight in shining armour,

Steve Harrington the Babysitter, sits beside him looking almost as equally worse for wear. Steve can't fight for shit.

They'd found him, hours after he was supposed to be back home, being kicked and beaten in an alleyway near the movie theatre. Will Byers going missing for more than thirty minutes, tops, prompted full-scale panic and a search party, these days. Still, it was hard for Will to be resentful at their overprotectiveness when his brother's sort-of-girlfriend's Ex had found him and rescued him and taken a beating for him.

His friends appear moments later, and he allows them to worry and fuss to their hearts content. Mike is all restless anger and sadness, something in his eyes threatening at becoming Will's permanent bodyguard. Whenever Jonathan looks at Will, a muscle jumps in his jaw, his teeth constantly grinding together. Max smooths a rainbow bandaid over one of his cuts and he snorts at it, consumed with black, bitter humour.

"How long has this been going on?" Lucas demands and they're all so loud and noisy and stupidly concerned. "We could have helped fix this."

But you can't fix a fairy. That's the problem. You can't even beat it out of someone, although half of Hawkins seemed to want to give it a try. El brushes hair from his face and he can't bring himself to meet her eyes. He is usually so strong for El, his sister, and would give her the world if she asked. She is quiet, lost in thought.

"Too many mouth breathers," She says simply and he cracks a pained smile.

"Yeah," he agrees "Too many to count."

He thinks about how his nightmares used to be full of actual, real monsters. But now they're different. He doesn't know who the real monsters are these days. El lays her head on his shoulder and Mike slips his hand into Will's. Nancy continues to dab at his cuts with a cloth as Dustin unhelpfully lists all the different ways that cuts can get infected, rattling off a list of diseases and all the 'crazy shit' microbes can do. He tunes them all out, tipping his head back with a

harsh exhale.

Will stares up at the sky and thinks that maybe he'd have been better off in the Upside Down.

4. Sixteen years old

Sixteen is the year of kissing boys behind dumpsters. Will works at the movie theatre now, smiles sweetly at old ladies and sneaks huge buckets of buttered popcorn to his friends when they visit him at work, or come to watch a film. He cuts his hair and on his lunch breaks or after parties, he kisses boys behind dumpsters and in alleyways, and tries not to think about how hidden his life has become. In one small act of defiance, he reclaims the alleyways where he spent the most time getting beaten up in, presses a boy against the bricks where he was first held down and punched. Each tug of hair and press of lips feels like revenge, like a middle finger to Hawkins.

He's still quiet, but not half as shy as he used to be. It is hard to be shy when you are renowned for being Gay and Dead. Some sort of queer zombie boy. Will tries to reign in his bitterness when one of his work shifts coincides with Mike and El's date night. He comes to clean out the theatre and watches them exchange easy, affectionate kisses and walk out boldly hand-in-hand. But he supposes it doesn't feel like boldness to them and he is the only one watching, anyway. The rest of the world ignores them, is accepting of their normalcy to the point of indifference. These are the days when everything dark he's ever seen and thought presses in and he wants to scream in frustration. And if he can't speak to either of his friends the next day, or even look them in the eye, they are kind enough not to mention it.

There are softer moments too, though, moments of brightness as he grows older. A boy brings Will some comics, asks him if he'd want to see a movie. Will is pleasantly surprised, no one goes out of their way to become his friend. It's like asking for trouble, in this town. It takes him two oblivious months, and a bunch of shyly presented carnations, to realise that the boy was taking him out on dates. It's fun and sweet. He receives different flowers each week, and his Mom displays them on the table in a vase proudly, until they're wilting, like someone loving him is some sort of achievement.

When the boy leaves, Will is upset but not that surprised. He also dreams of escaping Hawkins. His mother helps him to press flowers between old book pages, until they are dry and faded. He slides carnations gently between the pages of his sketchbook, tucks one flower behind El's ear and slips another into his locker. Little reminders of something sweet.

And softer still, than that, is Max sitting on a kitchen counter during a party neither of them want to be at, confessing that she kisses girls sometimes, too. That she feels lost and scared but so, so happy to finally be herself. To know herself. Will understands and holds her hand while she talks about pretty girls and their eyes, their hair and their perfume.

They all leave the party early, after Lucas and Mike start swinging punches at the jocks who have begun to toe the line between ordinary douchebag and straight up racist. They pile into Mike's basement and put a tape in the VHS player. They are giggly and relaxed, high on adrenaline and the few ciders they managed to grab. Together they talk and laugh, and commiserate over being a bunch of single friends at a party full of couples making out. Max and Mike barter playfully over who should get to ask out Anna, a pretty cheerleader who is unusually kind to their little group of losers and is also a closeted nerd.

El smiles gently at them and Will is grateful that they are all still so close, through childhood crushes and breakups, scraped knees and tears.

A few days later, Mike corners him and also confesses that he likes girls *and* boys and that he isn't sure what to do. He hadn't even known that you could like both, he exclaims to Will and Will just pats his shoulder in sympathy. Max walks over seconds later and Will just knows from the line of her slumped shoulders that she's returning, defeated, after another failed attempt at flirting with an oblivious girl. He looks from Max to Mike, and wonders, absurdly, if all of the party will end up queer. Mike is grinning, like he knows what Will is thinking.

"We should start a club," he suggests, straight faced and they all look at each other before bursting into laughter. Will isn't alone anymore, if he ever really was.

As proud members of the three-person-strong Queer Club, they become even closer. El makes them all little rainbow badges, that they wear proudly whenever the party meets. They bitch together about shitty Hawkins and tentatively discuss the future and leaving for bigger cities, where they hope things will be kinder. One afternoon, in the back of the library studying for midterms, Mike admits that he still hasn't kissed a boy. Will tilts his head thoughtfully.

"I'll kiss you?" He offers. Because he remembers his first kiss with a boy and the guilt and shame that followed it. The way he'd not been able to hold the hand of his first kiss. Will recalls, vividly, being someone's 'experiment' and a shameful secret. And he thinks that Mike doesn't deserve that. He should at least get to have his first with a friend, rather than some closeted stranger in Hawkins.

Mike considers him for a second and nods.

"Okay, sure"

They press their lips together, noses bumping and it's awkward and silly but it's not terrible. They draw back and look at each other.

"Okay," Mike says with a laugh, leaning in "Let's try that again."

And this time Will tilts his head to the side more, lets his mouth part slightly. Mike mirrors him, bringing a hand up to rest on his jaw. And then they're properly kissing and it's alien and strange and so, so weird. They break apart.

"That wasn't too bad?" Will says uncertainly and Mike huffs.

"No," he agrees "It wasn't." They stare at each other silently for a long moment. Will's lips twitch.

"Let's never do it again? Or speak of it, ever?" He suggests and Mike

nods his head vigorously, visibly relieved.

“Yes, yep, that was just...nope, yeah.” he says and Will holds back a snort.

It's at that moment that Max and Dustin appear, slamming textbooks down onto the table Will and Mike are sat at, with an air of pain and frustration that can only be achieved after several days of studying. Dustin glances over at the two of them.

“You guys alright?” He asks “You're both a bit red in the face.”

Will looks at Mike who looks right back, wide eyed, and the pair start giggling, helplessly

“What? What's so funny? What did we miss?” Dustin demands but Mike only clutches at his chest and wheezes whilst Will buries his head into the pile of textbooks, shaking with silent laughter. Max narrows her eyes and stares at them suspiciously.

But Will and Mike never tell a soul.

5. Seventeen years old

On the day of his seventeenth birthday, Nancy Wheeler nearly trips over his legs from where he's sprawled across the porch. She's back from college, here to visit Jonathan, but she stops when she sees his face. He's sporting a spectacular black eye.

“Lonnie decided to pay a visit,” Will explains with a wry smile and sad eyes. And so she sits down next to him, takes his hand, and tells him about college. She tells him about pride marches and some of the people she knows. And there's an actual club for queers, she says. An official one. And she thinks as they talk that he's so like Jonathan, their sense of humour near identical, but also so different. She manages to get him to laugh and she moves on to lighter topics, asking him about movies and his art. They're debating who the best ghostbuster is when they are interrupted by the door opening and Jonathan steps out, hands shoved deep into his pockets. He looks

tired and drawn.

“Wanna go get ice cream?” He suggests, dangling his car keys in front of them. Will lights up and Nancy follows them both to the car. They sing along, loudly and out of tune, to the radio as they drive and it feels like they're all part of some weird, dysfunctional family. Will is talking excitedly about a road trip he wants to take with his friends over the summer and soon they're all planning out things to see and do in each unexplored State. They eat scoops of ice cream, testing out every flavour because it's Wills birthday, so why not? It's one of those small, easy moments that you wish you could pause and as Will drinks in his brothers smiling eyes and Nancy's clear adoration for them both, he knows he'll remember this moment, more than any bad memory or nightmare, for the rest of his life. Ice cream, he thinks to himself, solves everything.

+ 1 18 years old

Will stands on his tiptoes, trying to reach the top shelf in the kitchen so that he can put away his cereal. He's just moved in to his college dorm, having won a scholarship for a fancy art school despite never really believing that he could do it. It's surreal, being so far from home, and he had barely been gone a few days but still feels an ache whenever he looks at the photos of his friends, tacked up on the walls in his room. Still, he has their numbers written down and practically engraved into his brain, he memorised them so hard. Plus, El and Max are here with him too, in the same city. They go to different colleges, Max having chosen medicine to everyone's surprise. But still, he's unused to being alone like this again.

He curses his height and jumps a little to try and fling the cereal box up to the shelf. It's not the brightest of plans but he'll take what he can get.

“Want a hand?” An amused voice asks, and he whirls around to come face to face with the prettiest boy he has ever seen. He fights a blush desperately. The boy, lanky and tall, offers out his hand with a smile. He passes the box over wordlessly and the boy takes it from him, their fingers brushing as he does. He casually slides the box onto the top shelf and Will means to say thank you but instead he looks

accusingly up and down the boys 6ft plus stature and says

“No need to show off, not all of us can be that tall,”

The boy blinks and then laughs, before standing up even straighter.

“Awh, but shorter people are just so cute!” He grins and offers his hand out to shake with a wink. Will does blush this time, quickly taking the hand and dropping it.

“My names Richie,” the boy says “Looks like we're gonna be dorm buddies! And you are?”

“Will,”

Richie nods and they're both staring stupidly at each other, with dumb, wide smiles.

“Nice to meetcha William, my dear fellow!” Richie says and Will mumbles something similar back, if a little less enthusiastic, feeling ridiculously nervous and full of butterflies all of a sudden. He goes to leave the kitchen, to finish properly unpacking, and he brushes Richie's arm as he moves by. He shivers. Just before he leaves, Richie pipes up.

“Hey, Will, you want to go explore the city together later? We could get coffee too if you want?” His tone is hopeful and honestly, how can Will be expected to resist? He turns back around and grins.

“I'd love to,” he says sincerely and he marvels to himself at how giddy he feels. So, maybe he didn't have a proper first crush as a kid that he could laugh about with his friends. And maybe he didn't get to have cute first dates and an innocent, adorable first relationship. But maybe here, in a city full of people doing the thing he loves most, he can finally have what he wants.

2. Will Meets Bev

Summary for the Chapter:

Annnnnnnndddd I'm switching tenses. Again. What a surprise. This is a short lil fic about Bev/Max and Richie/Will meeting n stuff. It ends quite abruptly and I haven't edited it so....sorry lmao

Notes for the Chapter:

This is for my newly adopted lil sis & loml @bxbystxrs on tumblr dot com she writes really amazing good ryers stuff and so i wanted to give her some back xxxx

“Richie?”

“Beverly?!”

Will and Max glanced at each other, confused, as their respective partners stood frozen across from each other. Max raised an eyebrow and Will shrugged. The moment they'd both confessed to the other that they were in relationships, Will had decided immediately that they needed to go out on a double date. It was yet another romantic cliché experience that he'd missed out on during his unforgiving small town childhood. Now, Will looked curiously between Richie and Max's girlfriend, Beverly Marsh.

“You guys know each other then, I take it?” He asked and Richie laughed, almost bewilderedly. He ran a hand through his curls and looked down at Will.

“Yeah, um yeah, I mean.... It's Beverly fucking Marsh.” he said helplessly as if that explained anything. Will nodded slowly. Right. The pair continued to stare at each other like long lost soulmates. As if sensing his confusion, Beverly took it upon herself to explain.

“We were friends as kids,” she said, warmly, and Will decided there and then that he liked her. She radiated kindness, like the sun. “I lost touch with everyone, though, a while back, god it's good to see you!” Bev finished and she rushed forwards to wrap Richie in a tight, one armed hug. Richie hugged back just as tightly but slightly more awkwardly, unwilling to unwrap his arm from Will's waist. Will was still slightly uncomfortable about being affectionate too openly in public, so Richie didn't want to risk letting him go.

Will smiled at the pair. All of Richie's friends were really cool, he knew from experience. When they'd first started dating, Richie would spend so much time with his old friends or on the phone to them that Will had nearly assumed the worst. But Richie had been quick to explain and to introduce him to the so-called ‘Losers Club’ and he'd immediately understood. They weren't just Richie's friends, they were his family. He especially liked Stan, who's dark and absurd sense of humour struck a chord with Will. Joking about your trauma was a way of survival, sometimes. And through some weird twist of fate, Will had unknowingly already met the ‘leader’ of their group, Bill, at college. They'd been friends since their first class together, when Will had lent him some of his precious acrylics so that he wouldn't have to resort to the crappy college resources. Beverly though, had never been mentioned to Will, as far as he could recall.

Richie tugged on a strand of Beverly's red hair and searched her face.

“January embers?!” He demanded, to Will's confusion. Beverly gave him a half smile and looked back at Max, with a stupidly sappy

expression on her face. More points in her favour, Will thought.

“Well, it turns out I’m actually a massive lesbian,” she admitted in a stage whisper and Richie snorted and Will choked on a laugh.

“Me too, Bev,” he replied, hand tightening around Will. “Me fucking too.” Beverly turned to face Will expectantly and he gave a half awkward wave, whilst mentally face palming at his inability to interact normally in social situations. Beverly Marsh was everything he expected a girlfriend of Max’s to be. Intimidatingly gorgeous, evidently funny and ready to kill a man. He imagined that she’d have been the blazing centerpiece of the Loser’s Club, back in its heyday.

“I’m Will,” he offered, holding out a hand to shake but Beverly just grinned, bypassing the hand to plant a kiss on his cheek. He blushed involuntarily.

“Nice to meet you, Will. Max was telling me you were the founder of a Queer Club, back in Hawkins? Are there badges? Because I want in,” Will laughed.

“Uh yeah, there were actually,” he admitted, thinking fondly of the dumb little rainbow pins they’d all worn so proudly. “My sister El made some.” Richie snorted.

“Yeah, as if the bruises you got weren’t enough of a badge, Willy boy. You’re so lucky I’m in your life now, to defend you and your honour,” Will jabbed him in the side with his elbow, hard, and Max looked them both over skeptically as he yelped.

“From what Will’s told me, if you’d both been together in Hawkins, you’d have been dead in a week.” Max said and Richie gasped, mock offended, clutching a hand to his chest.

“I’m Will’s knight in shining armour, Maxine.” Richie insisted. He waved a hand at the shorter boy next to him in a vaguely insulting manner. “I mean, have you seen William? He’s like five foot nothing, and light as a feather. It is my duty to protect him.” To prove his point, Richie wrapped both arms around Will and lifted him up into the air, spinning him around. Will shrieked and smacked at Richie’s chest.

“Richie! Put me down!” But Richie just cackled, nearly slinging Will over his shoulder. Max and Beverly looked at each other and around at the bystanders on the street who were now openly staring as Richie manhandled Will and he, ineffectively, struggled to get down. The girls took each other’s hands and Bev cleared her throat and they stood together, united in their exasperation. Max, exasperated at how easily Will went weak for Richie. Bev, exasperated at the oh-so-familiar display of typical Richie antics. Antics that were, evidently, timeless.

“Okay, guys, let’s just go to the milkshake place, yeah?” Max said, and walked away without waiting for a reply. Bev matched her pace, stride for stride. Immediately, Richie dropped Will.

“What the fuck, Richard?” Will demanded, but it came out as a squeak and Richie just grinned. He grabbed him by the arm and scrambled to pull him around so that they could give chase.

“Quick!” He yelled, in an indecipherable Voice, “The lesbians have abandoned us!”

Ten minutes later found them sipping milkshakes in booths across from each other, in a small, student diner place where “all-sorts” were welcomed. Richie hadn't stopped talking since they'd arrived. He was in the middle of a very long and detailed explanation of Will's various virtues and talents. He gestured wildly as he talked and Beverly felt a small pang in her chest as she realised that she'd missed out on seeing her boy grow up. He was all gangly and long-limbed now. And clearly in love. Bev liked to think that her and Max had the monopoly on romance out of all of the couples she knew. But the way Richie behaved around Will...it was sickeningly adorable.

The moment they'd sat down in the booth Will had wordlessly handed over napkins for Richie to shred and fold, to keep his hands occupied. She also noted that Will had picked up extra straws, one of which Richie was currently twirling between his fingers. And every time Richie stopped to look at Will, something that happened a lot, he would literally glow. They had even decided to share a milkshake, for god's sake. Bev turned to exchange a look with Max, so that they could both commiserate over how disgustingly sweet their friends were, but got distracted by the scattering of freckles on her girlfriend's nose and the adorable way it scrunched up as she laughed. Okay, so maybe there was more than enough cheesy romance to go around. She turned back to face the boys.

“...tonally much more abstract than his last pieces, but I really think he makes it work,” Richie was saying, enthusiastically. “And he's here on a scholarship, Bev! A scholarship! Have I mentioned that yet?”

“Only about five times or so now.” Bev replied dryly, watching with amusement as Will's face grew impossibly red. The small boy shoved

at Richie, with surprising strength judging from the way Richie nearly fell from the booth. Will glared.

“Richie, please stop talking as if you're not some genius that got into college without even studying!” Will argued and Max let out a little groan, letting her head drop to the table with a thunk. She was pretty sure that this was about to devolve into full on bickering over who was better. Richie scoffed.

“But I can’t make art!” Richie protested, throwing his hands up dramatically, scattering napkins everywhere and nearly knocking over their milkshake. Will shook his head in exasperation before glancing at Bev in a conspiratorial manner and motioning for her to watch. Then, with something like hesitance, Will leaned over and took Richie’s face in his hands. Bev watched curiously as Richie went completely silent and a stillness fell over the table. Max straightened in her seat.

“Baby, you are the art,” Will finally said, completely dead-pan. It was so cheesy and dumb, yet Richie actually blushed, seemingly speechless. Bev stared, astonished, as he turned beetroot red before her eyes, something she had never witnessed in her life, and just gaped at Will, wordlessly, like a fish. Richie Tozier: pole-axed by one term of endearment and a corny compliment. Bev couldn’t help herself. She snorted, loudly, and then dissolved into helpless giggles. Next to her, Max was practically cackling. Will had confided in her before that Richie was a complete and utter sucker for pet names and became extremely flustered whenever Will used them, especially because he didn’t use them that often. Whilst the Loser’s club used “beep-beep” to mute Richie whenever he got carried away, Will would just interrupt with a “Hey, babe?” or a “Richie, sweetheart,” and then lean back, smiling smugly at the others, when Richie was startled into silence every time. Will was smiling just as smugly now as he watched in mild amusement as Bev buried her face in Max’s neck, shaking with laughter. Richie snapped back to himself and

frowned at Will.

“That’s cheating,” he accused with a pout and Will just sipped at his milkshake serenely. He was the picture of innocence. Taking pity, Max disentangled herself from Bev and grabbed for her own milkshake, offering Richie a wicked grin.

“Wanna hear some embarrassing stories about Will?” she asked and Will’s eyes widened. Oh god. Will was quiet, kind and sweet. No-one was able to tell any embarrassing tales about him and he didn’t really have any particularly regrettable moments or ill-advised escapades anyway, not like Richie did. Will just didn’t have embarrassing moments. Except for moments with his self-styled ‘partner in crime’, Max, who had joined him as his date at every single party and prom. Who had witnessed him at his drunkest and loudest moments. Will sunk into the booth as she began to regale Richie with one of Will’s more shameful moments. It was going to be a long afternoon.

Notes for the Chapter:

im probs just gonna keep posting lil drabbles about the Queer Club and The losers club here so if you have anything at all you wanna see, just comment it and I'll write it for u
(altho maxy gets priority ily)

Author's Note:

Hmu on tumblr @thestrangestbyers for more of the same!!!! Come chat about my boi Will w me!